AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS COMMITTEE.

Meeting : 5th July, 1939.

Present :

COUNCILLOR SOULSBY (Chairman).

COUNCILLORS AYERST, MRS. DOWNER, GRAVES, HARTLEY, NICHOLS, OGDEN, PRATT, SMART and VIVEASH.

Messrs. W. R. FORD, A. W. HARTLEY, F. W. LYONS and H. PANTON.

MRS. O. E. WETZEL.

THE CLERK, TREASURER, ENGINEER AND SURVEYOR, MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH, AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS OFFICER, CHIEF OFFICER OF THE FIRE BRIGADE and CHIEF ENGINEERING ASSISTANT.

1. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held 7th June, 1939, having been circulated, were taken as read, and were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

2. Apologies.

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs. Greenhead and Messrs. Evans and Whistance.

3. Accounts.

It was RESOLVED :

That accounts amounitng to £129 3s. 1d. be forwarded to the Finance Committee for payment, subject to verification by the Chairman.

4. Treasurer's Report.

The Treasurer submitted a report containing (a) cash statement of receipts and payments, and (b) statement of income and expenditure, a copy of which is filed on pages 32-33, file 32, Reports of Officers.

5. Air Raid Precautions Sub-Committee.

Arising from item 59 of the minutes of the meeting of the Council held 28th June, 1939, the Clerk submitted, for information, the minutes of the meeting of the Air Raid Precautions Sub-Committee held 27th June, 1939, and reported the additions thereto which had been made by the Council. The Clerk also submitted copy of a letter dated 1st July, 1939, from the County A.R.P. Officer, stating that any expenditure in connection with the purchase of armlets would not be allowed to rank for grant, and that the Home Office proposed to adopt other means of distinguishing the various A.R.P. Services.

Arising from item 4 (h) of the minutes of the meeting of the Air Raid Precautions Sub-Committee held 27th June, 1939, it was RESOLVED :

That application be made to the County Council for approval to, and grant for, the refreshments to be supplied, and that, in the event of the County Council not giving their approval, application be made to the Ministry of Health to meet the cost from the General Rate Fund.

6. Wardens' Posts.

The Chairman of the Council submitted a report (a copy of which is filed on page 34, file 32, Reports of Officers) with regard to an interview which had taken place with the Hon. Arthur Howard, Principal Air Raid Warden of the Metropolitan Police District, on the 2nd July, 1939, and stating that Mr. Howard stressed the urgent necessity for the erection and completion of the 35 Wardens' Posts which had been approved for this district.

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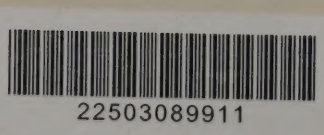
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The Chairman of the Council reported that Mr. Howard had expressed the view that these posts should be completed and ready for use in about four weeks' time, and had said that local authorities would be obliged to suspend any of their Byelaws, Standing Orders, resolutions or other regulations which might in any way interfere with this work, and that these observations applied also to the legal, financial and practical issues involved.

The Engineer and Surveyor reported in detail on the matter (item 8 of his report and item 2 of the addendum thereto), and stated that, having regard to the above, he had called a conference of contractors undertaking this type of work, and that from the tenders already received from such contractors, which he submitted, it was most unlikely that the Wardens' Posts would be constructed within the limit of cost approved by the Home Office.

The Engineer and Surveyor reported that it was understood that 28 new posts would have to be constructed, and that a conference had been arranged with the Home Office for Friday, the 7th July, as to the question of cost.

The Engineer and Surveyor pointed out that it was doubtful if there was statutory authority for the erection of Wardens' Posts on highways, and that, where they were erected clear of the highway, it appeared that they would be in front of building lines and would not generally comply with Town Planning requirements, further, that if the posts were completed in accordance with the various Home Office circulars, they would not comply with the Building Byelaws in several particulars.

After consideration, it was moved by Mr. Lyons and seconded by Councillor Ogden :

(a) That the work of constructing the 28 Wardens' Posts be proceeded with forthwith, and that the Chairman of the Council, Chairman of the Committee and the appropriate officers be authorised to take any action considered necessary to expedite the completion of these posts, with power to act.

(b) That the Plans and Town Planning Committee be asked to recommend the Council to relax their Byelaws relating to Streets and Buildings, and, if necessary, to vary the Planning Scheme to permit of the erection of these posts, particularly in view of the proposal to erect some on the highways.

It was moved by Councillor Hartley and seconded by Councillor Ayerst as an amendment :

That this Council views with considerable alarm the request of the Principal Air Raid Warden, and ask that a representative from the Home Office should attend before the Committee to discuss the various difficulties.

The amendment, upon being put to the meeting, was declared not carried, 3 voting in favour and 9 against.

Whereupon it was RESOLVED (10 voting in favour and Councillor Hartley against) :

(a) That the work of constructing the 28 Wardens' Posts be proceeded with forthwith, and that the Chairman of the Council, Chairman of the Committee and the appropriate officers be authorised to take any action considered necessary to expedite the completion of these posts, with power to act.

(b) That the Plans and Town Planning Committee be asked to recommend the Council to relax their Byelaws relating to Streets and Buildings, and, if necessary, to vary the Planning Scheme to permit of the erection of these posts, particularly in view of the proposal to erect some on the highways.

It was also RESOLVED :

(1) That in connection with this matter the Standing Orders of the Council relating to Contracts be suspended.

(2) That the action taken by the Engineer and Surveyor in obtaining tenders from selected Contractors be approved and confirmed.

(3) That subject to the approval of the County Council the Clerk be authorised to enter into negotiations and to complete agreements with the owners of private land where required for the erection of the posts, and that the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to such agreements.

(Councillors Ogden, Hartley and Smart and Mrs. Wetzel entered the meeting during the foregoing item. Councillors Graves and Viveash left the meeting during the foregoing item.)

7. Applications for Increases in Salary.

(a) A.R.P. OFFICER.

Arising from item 10 (a), page 228, of the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, the Clerk submitted a schedule of replies received from authorities in Middlesex regarding the salaries of their A.R.P. Officers and containing details of their A.R.P. staff. A copy of such schedule is filed on pages 35-37, file 32, Reports of Officers.

After consideration, it was RESOLVED :

That the General Purposes Committee be asked to recommend that the salary of the A.R.P. Officer be increased by £100 per annum, subject to the approval of the County Council.

(Councillors Hartley and Soulsby left the meeting at this point and Councillor Nichols took the Chair.)

(b) P. KING, CLERK IN A.R.P. DEPARTMENT.

Arising from item 10 (b), page 228, of the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, the Clerk submitted a letter dated 9th June, 1939, from the Home Office, stating that the post held by Mr. King was not considered to be of such essential importance as to justify an application to the War Office for his release from his obligation as a Reservist.

The Clerk stated that, accordingly, Mr. King had now temporarily left the Council's service to carry out the required service in the Reserve.

It was RESOLVED :

That consideration of Mr. King's application be deferred until his return to duty.

8. Evacuation.

Arising from item 60, page 239, of the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, it was RESOLVED :

That further representations be made to the Ministry of Health for this district to be included in the areas to be evacuated in the event of an emergency.

9. Engineer and Surveyor's Reports.

The Engineer and Surveyor submitted a report and an addendum thereto, copies of which are filed on pages 38-55, file 32, Reports of Officers.

10. Progress Report.

The Engineer and Surveyor reported on the present progress of the various A.R.P. schemes (item 1 of his report).

11. Adaptation of Ambulance Stations.

The Engineer and Surveyor submitted extract from a letter dated 13th June, 1939, from the Ambulance Officer, M.C.C., relating to the accommodation, etc., required at Ambulance Depots.

Arising therefrom it was RESOLVED :

(a) That the County Council be asked to agree to the provision of clothes hooks for the use of personnel when on duty.

(b) That the County Council be requested to supply more definite information as to blast and splinter proof protection, and be informed that the Committee are of the opinion that the necessary provision should be made immediately instead of leaving the matter to be dealt with by means of sand-bagging in the event of an emergency.

12. Adaptation of Fixed First Aid Posts.

Arising from item 31, page 138, of the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held 3rd May, 1939, the Engineer and Surveyor reported that preliminary plans for the adaptation of the three fixed first aid posts had been submitted to the County Medical Officer, together with a list of queries, to which the County Medical Officer had replied.

The Engineer and Surveyor submitted these queries and the replies (pages 4 to 7 of his report), in which it was stated that it had been decided that the new M.C.C. Health Centre being constructed in the vicinity of Minet Drive should replace the Queen's Hall as a first aid post.

13. Vans for Ambulance Training Purposes.

The Medical Officer of Health reported that, in accordance with the instructions of the County Medical Officer, he had ordered two second-hand vans at a cost of £50 each, the order being subject to confirmation in writing of approval to the purchase being received from the County Council.

14. A.R.P. Trenches Opened Out During September, 1938 Crisis.

(a) MESSRS. TAYLOR WOODROW CONSTRUCTION LTD.

Arising from item 46, page 238, of the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, the Engineer and Surveyor submitted a copy of a letter dated 10th June, 1939, from the Clerk of the County Council, stating:

"I have perused the documents and correspondence which you sent to me and I am of opinion that the arrangement set out in the Company's letter of the 30th September last has been superseded by the arrangement set out in the letter of the 13th October. My view therefore is that the Company cannot contend that they are not bound by the letter of the 13th October, nor can they contend that they are at liberty to elect to be bound only by the letter of the 30th September.

"With regard to the actual items of deduction which are disputed by the Company, it would appear as they depend upon questions of fact, the difficulties might be resolved by an amicable discussion between your Council's Surveyor and the Company's representative. However, if it is not possible to dispose of the matter in this way,I think that the Company should be notified that the matter would be referred to the Lord Privy Seal's Department for consideration."

It was RESOLVED:

That the matter be referred to the Lord Privy Seal's Department for consideration, as suggested by the Clerk of the County Council.

(b) MAINTENANCE OF TRENCHES.

The Engineer and Surveyor submitted a letter dated 16th June, 1939, from the County Engineer and Surveyor, stating that the cost of the maintenance of existing trenches, such as the cutting of grass, etc., would not rank as grant earning expenditure.

(c) MAKING PERMANENT OF A.R.P. TRENCHES—SECTION 1.

The Engineer and Surveyor reported that difficulty was being experienced in obtaining suitable labour from local sources for the above, and that, if necessary, he proposed to agree to requirements for this contract being brought to the attention of other Employment Exchanges.

It was RESOLVED:

That the action proposed to be taken by the Engineer and Surveyor be approved.

(d) MAKING PERMANENT OF A.R.P. TRENCHES—SECTION 2.

Arising from item 36, page 234, of the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, the Engineer and Surveyor reported that the following was the approximate value of the work calculated on the scheduled rates included in the various tenders, and upon assumed quantities, and that the information had been forwarded to the County Engineer and Surveyor:—

Tender No.	Name of Tenderer	Amount £ s. d.
1.	Anti Bomb Construction Co., Ltd.	6,842 11 2
2.	... ...	8,433 9 1
3.	... ...	11,158 4 2
4.	... ...	10,229 8 0
5.	... ...	9,803 12 0
6.	Tileman and Co., Ltd.	7,222 12 8
7.	... ...	8,708 0 6
8.	... ...	13,868 13 6
9.	... ...	9,379 18 4
10.	... ...	Tender incomplete
11.	General Contracting and Engineering Co. ...	8,095 14 11
12.	... ...	Tender Pre-cast Units
13.	... ...	11,440 12 1

15. A.R.P. Constructional Works Carried Out By Direct Labour.

The Engineer and Surveyor submitted a memorandum dated 12th June, 1939, from the Treasurer, indicating the new policy of the Home Office with regard to the wages of men employed on direct labour works, and he stated that, while he was still of the opinion that the practice of carrying out A.R.P. works by contract should be adhered to, there were cases when for reasons of convenience, expedition or otherwise, procedure by direct labour might be desirable, as for example in the case of the provision of foundations in the Council Chamber, and the carrying out of small items of work such as shelving, Wistowe House.

It was RESOLVED :

That the Engineer and Surveyor be instructed to carry out the works mentioned by direct labour.

16. Land for A.R.P. Trenches: Minet Estate.

Arising from item 48, page 238, of the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, the Engineer and Surveyor submitted a copy of a letter which had been addressed to Mr. A. J. Carpenter by the Clerk of the County Council in connection with the above, from which it appeared that there was little possibility of the land in question being obtained for the making permanent of the trenches.

The Clerk stated that he was taking up the matter further with the Clerk of the County Council.

17. Telephone Lines to Minet Drive Depot.

Arising from item 56, page 240, of the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, the Engineer and Surveyor submitted a copy of a letter dated 7th June, 1939, from the County A.R.P. Officer, stating that the Home Office would not approve for grant purposes the cost of putting underground one of the telephone lines to Minet Drive Depot.

18. Additional Public Shelters.

The Engineer and Surveyor reported that it was desirable that the proposed sites for additional Public Shelters should be inspected by the Committee or the A.R.P. Sub-Committee.

It was RESOLVED :

That the matter be referred to the A.R.P. Sub-Committee, and that it be left to the Chairman of the Sub-Committee to call the meeting.

19. Adaptation of Auxiliary Fire Stations.

(a) BLAST AND SPLINTER-PROOFING.

Arising from item 4, page 133, of the minutes of the meeting of the A.R.P. Emergency Committee held 24th April, 1939, the Engineer and Surveyor submitted a copy of a letter dated 14th June, 1939, from the Home Office, stating that it was proposed to issue a circular in connection with the above in the near future, and that sandbagging should be resorted to should the necessity arise.

(b) CLEANSING ACCOMMODATION.

Arising from item 16, page 135, of the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held 3rd May, 1939, the Engineer and Surveyor reported that he had been informed by the A.R.P. Officer that he had been in touch with the Home Office in connection with the above, and that no expenses should be incurred on the provision of cleansing accommodation until intructions were issued by the Home Office.

20. Use of Cleansing Transport for A.R.P. Purposes.

The Engineer and Surveyor reported that the Clerk of the Council had informed him that the exemption from the Licensing Regulations in respect of the use of Refuse Freighters Nos. 1 and 2 for refuse collection did not appear to apply if they were used for any other purposes, which precluded the use of these two freighters for A.R.P. demonstrations.

21. Proposed Public Shelter, Hewens Road.

The Engineer and Surveyor submitted a copy of a letter dated 21st June, 1939, from the A.R.P. Officer, Middlesex County Council, pointing out that the County Architect was at the present time preparing sketch plans for a new Library at Hewens Road, near the junction with Uxbridge Road, and enquiring whether provision for a Public Shelter should be made in, or under the proposed new building, for the use of persons likely to be caught in the streets during an air raid.

The Engineer and Surveyor reported that, after consultation with the Clerk of the Council, they had informed the County A.R.P. Officer that in their opinion such provision should be made, and had enquired the number of persons who would be accommodated in the event of the shelter being provided.

It was RESOLVED:

That the action taken be approved and confirmed.

22. Communications, Short Term Report Centre.

The Engineer and Surveyor reported that owing to the fact that Post Office engineers attended the Town Hall to fix the telephones for the Short Term Report Centre, it was necessary for a small amount of building work to be undertaken by direct labour in the Council Chamber.

The Clerk reported that he had signed the necessary agreements with the Post Office for the telephone installations at the message room and report centre, approval to which was given in a letter dated 22nd May, 1939, from the County A.R.P. Officer.

It was RESOLVED :

That the action taken be approved and confirmed.

23. Home Shelters.

Arising from item 42 (b), page 237, of the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, the Engineer and Surveyor submitted a letter dated 13th June, 1939, from the Regional Technical Advisor, enclosing particulars of an experiment by which an Anderson Shelter was made water-tight by applying a lining of concrete to the inside, and suggesting that this method might be used in this district in all but the very worst places.

In connection with this matter, the Engineer and Surveyor drew attention to M.C.C. Circular No. 52/1939, dealing with the cost of erection of these shelters.

It was RESOLVED:

That, in preparing the scheme for the erection of home shelters, the Engineer and Surveyor be instructed to proceed on the lines suggested by the Regional Technical Advisor.

(Councillor Soulsby returned to the meeting during the foregoing item, and took the Chair at this point.)

24. Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors.

The Engineer and Surveyor submitted a letter dated 16th June, 1939, from the County Engineer and Surveyor, giving the names of three firms who had been allotted by the Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors to place their plant and services at the Council's disposal in the event of an emergency.

25. Direction Signs.

The Engineer and Surveyor drew attention to paragraph 2 of M.C.C. Circular No. 56/1939, in which it was suggested that local authorities might now prepare and store in readiness for an emergency, notices directing the public to trenches and first aid posts.

It was RESOLVED:

That the Engineer and Surveyor be instructed to obtain the requisite notices, as suggested.

26. Protection of Employees at Their Place of Work.

The Engineer and Surveyor submitted the following estimates for the above:

	£	s.	d.
(a) Shelter accommodation for Council employees based on plans already submitted to Committee: shelters consisting of steel sections sunk approximately 3 ft. to 4 ft. and covered with 2 ft. of earth—			
Town Hall for 100 persons	600	0	0
Minet Drive Depot for 60 persons	260	0	0
(b) Provision of dark blinds to Town Hall buildings and annex, to 3 and 13 Rathgar Villas, to offices, etc., at Minet Drive Depot including shutters to workshop windows	150	0	0
(c) Direction signs for aiding movement of traffic to and in Minet Drive Depot, Town Hall, etc.	20	0	0
(d) Emergency lighting to Town Hall and Annex, Nos. 3 and 13 Rathgar Villas and Minet Drive Depot	50	0	0
Total	£1,080	0	0

The Engineer and Surveyor referred to item 4, page 262, of the minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held 14th June, 1939, and requested instructions as to whether proceedings in connection with this scheme were to be suspended pending the conference referred to in such item.

It was RESOLVED:

(a) That the General Purposes Committee be asked to arrange for the safe keeping of the Council's deeds, records, etc., in a place other than the proposed shelter in the Town Hall Park, in order that this scheme may be proceeded with without delay.

(b) That the matter be referred to the Finance Committee with a view to obtaining consent to loan for the expenditure of £1,080 less the amount of grant.

(c) That application be made for grant towards the cost of the scheme.

27. A.R.P. Constructional Works—Contingencies.

The Engineer and Surveyor drew attention to the fact that the Home Office would not allow any provision by way of contingencies in estimates for A.R.P. constructional works, and that estimates submitted and approved would be exceeded if, during the execution of any works, some additional cost was involved.

28. A.R.P. Officer's Report.

The A.R.P. Officer submitted a report, a copy of which is filed on pages 56-62, file 32, Reports of Officers.

29. Wardens' Meeting.

The A.R.P. Officer submitted the minutes of a Wardens' Meeting held at the Town Hall on the 23rd June, 1939, a copy of which is filed on pages 60-61, file 32, Reports of Officers.

30. Incendiary Bomb Demonstration.

The A.R.P. Officer drew attention to an article which had appeared in the local Press on the 17th June, 1939, under the heading "Playing With Fire," and reported on the matter (item 2 of his report).

31. Utility Vehicle and Employment of Assistant-Storeman/Driver.

The A.R.P. Officer reported that, owing to the increasing number of A.R.P. exercises now carried out in the evenings, the use of hired transport was no longer in the interests of efficiency, and stated that he had, therefore, requested the County Council to approve expenditure for the employment of an assistant storeman/driver and the purchase of a vehicle, together with garaging and running costs.

It was RESOLVED :

That the action taken be approved and confirmed, and that the Chairman and appropriate officials be authorised to purchase the vehicle and appoint the assistant-storeman/driver upon receipt of approval from the County Council.

32. Strength Return.

The A.R.P. Officer submitted a strength return, showing the strength of A.R.P. Services on the 24th June, 1939, a copy of which is filed on page 62, file 32, Reports of Officers.

33. Assistant A.R.P. Officer.

The A.R.P. Officer reported that Mr. Hough commenced duties as Assistant A.R.P. Officer on the 26th June, 1939.

34. Requisition Book.

The Chairman was authorised to sign the Requisition Book submitted from the A.R.P. Department.

35. A.R.P. Exercise—Southern Counties.

The A.R.P. Officer submitted London Region Circular No. 11, stating that a "black-out" would be held in the area from The Wash to Bournemouth, including the London Area, on the night of 9th - 10th August, 1939, and asking the Council to secure as great a degree of darkness as was practicable between the hours of 12.30 a.m. and 4 a.m. on that night, the reasonable cost of this being allowed to rank for grant.

It was RESOLVED :

(a) That the matter be left in the hands of the Engineer and Surveyor and A.R.P. Officer, to ascertain the action proposed to be taken by other authorities in this matter, and to act accordingly.

(b) That a combined exercise of the district be held on the same night as the "black-out."

(Councillors Ogden and Pratt left the meeting at this point.)

36. Recruitment of Rescue and Repair Services.

The A.R.P. Officer drew attention to M.C.C. Circular No. 53/1939, stating, inter alia, that it was thought that local authorities should set up a small joint Committee or at least confer with representatives of the Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors, the London Master Builders Association, and the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives, on the question of recruiting and training of rescue parties and such other subjects as could conveniently be discussed with them.

The Clerk pointed out that in item 31, page 233, of the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, a conference was proposed with the same organisations on another matter, and suggested that the question of recruiting and training of rescue parties could be dealt with at the same conference.

37. Fee For Instruction To Decontamination Squad.

The A.R.P. Officer reported that he had received an application from Mr. C. Gray, L.A.G.C., to be paid the L.A.G.C. instructor's fee in respect of instruction to a decontamination squad on the 14th June, 1939, which occupied two hours of his time.

It was RESOLVED :

That Mr. Gray be paid for the two hours' overtime at the normal rate.

38. Procedure.

At 10.30 p.m. it was RESOLVED :

That Standing Order No. 39 be suspended.

39. Ambulance—Voluntary Industrial Aid For Spain.

The A.R.P. Officer submitted a letter dated 1st July, 1939, from the Chairman and Acting Secretary of the Hayes Branch of the above Association, stating that, owing to the cessation of the Spanish War, they had one motor-cycle ambulance which was practically completed, one motor-cycle which had to be re-assembled and an ambulance built on to it, and a smaller machine which needed a small carrying body attaching, and the Acting Secretary asked if the Committee would accept the machines as a gift to the local A.R.P. organisation provided the vehicles were finished off to their designs, if his committee so decided.

It was RESOLVED :

That the offer, if made by the Association, be accepted with thanks, subject to the approval of the County Council.

40. Wardens' Hut, Harlington.

Arising from item 57, page 240, of the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, the A.R.P. Officer reported that the Chief Warden, Mr. Ford, and himself were of the opinion that the island site at the junction of Station Road and North Hyde Road would be suitable for the erection of the Wardens' Hut for Harlington.

It was RESOLVED :

That the site suggested be approved, and that the Chairman of the Council and the Chairman of the Parks and Cemeteries Committee be asked to agree to the use of this land for the purpose of the erection of a Wardens' Hut, also that the County Council be asked for their approval.

41. Deputy Chief Warden.

Arising from item 53, page 239, of the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, the Clerk submitted correspondence which had taken place with Mr. W. C. Mongor in connection with his decision to resign his position of Deputy Chief Warden.

It was RESOLVED:

That Mr. Mongor's resignation be accepted with regret, and that the question of the appointment of his successor be deferred until the next meeting.

42. A.R.P. Exercise—Damage, The Lake, Botwell.

Arising from item 55, page 240, of the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, the Clerk submitted a letter dated 23rd June, 1939, from the County Accountant, stating that the circumstances in which the damage occurred were such as to preclude the County Council from repaying to the Council the cost of repairs under the financial regulations issued in connection with the Air Raid Precautions Act.

43. Town's Meeting, 22nd July—Band.

It was RESOLVED:

That the Hayes and Harlington Silver Band be engaged at a fee of £4 4s. 0d. for the above.

Chairman.

The meeting terminated at 10.44 p.m.